

## **Report of the President's Sustainability Council, 3 February 2010**

**Dear President Shoukri,**

The President's Sustainability Council is pleased to present this report to you as a framework for building a York University sustainability strategy. The Council presents a vision of sustainability for York that is conjoined with five core principles for understanding and enacting sustainability in the University. Guided by a long-term perspective, holistic outlook, acceptance of limits, focus on place and active involvement in problem-solving, the vision presented here responds to York's unique identity, history, challenges and strengths. The Council presents 39 recommendations for moving forward with sustainability, organized into key themes of organizational structure, curriculum, social justice and human rights, and campus operations and development.

As you are aware, York earned the highest rank of Canadian universities in the 2009 College Sustainability Report Card, an evaluation of B+. A testament to the University's dynamic range of sustainability initiatives, this confirms that we have a solid base of interest in and commitment to sustainability upon which to build. Yet many of York's strengths are not reflected in the Report Card, for example the extent to which sustainability is integrated into York curriculum. This year the Schulich School of Business was assessed by the Aspen Institute as the very best MBA program worldwide offering a comprehensive and integrated understanding of social and environmental issues impacting business. In 2008-09 Schulich also received top ranking among MBA programs in the Corporate Knights assessment of the integration of environmental and social issues, while Osgoode ranked second among law schools and the Faculty of Education ranked sixth among teacher education programs. These are all distinctions York should be proud of. Yet there is still much room for improvement.

York is currently in a period of resource contraction, an outstanding challenge to any form of strategic planning for the University. The Council presents this report in the spirit of enriching York's environmental resilience, social equity and economic buoyancy both within the near future and over coming generations. The Council feels that a pan-university approach to sustainability is essential, guided by a York University statement that clearly describes the meaning of sustainability at York and delineates responsibilities and commitments within the University.

York has the potential to become a sustainability leader among universities both within Canada and globally. The University is well poised in this respect. Many have worked hard to promote and establish University policies, programs, procedures and practices that are environmentally respectful, socially just and economically sustainable. The Council submits this report to you as a means of consolidating a pan-University approach to sustainability, an approach that should distinguish York as a leader responding to the world's most pressing contemporary concerns while remaining mindful of the University's distinct identity.

We applaud you for your commitment to sustainability, and look forward to helping advance this vision at York.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Foster, on behalf of the members of the President's Sustainability Council

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report situates sustainability as a concept guiding York University. The President's Sustainability Council finds that York is already engaged in a rich array of very substantial sustainability initiatives. For example, the University is well known for groundbreaking interdisciplinary curriculum, for instance in the Faculty of Environmental Studies and the Schulich School of Business. The Institute for Research and Innovation on Sustainability has made critical connections between the scholarly and applied dimensions of sustainability, both within the Greater Toronto Area and internationally. York's commitment to social justice is exemplified through an impressive range of community engagement and human rights programs. Campus Services and Business Operations has integrated sustainability initiatives throughout its processes and functions, achieved important reductions in energy consumption, diverted a great deal of waste through recycling and reusing materials, and adopted a sustainable building strategy. And the University's shift toward sustainable transportation has been vigorous, with a dramatic change in the commuter modal split from approximately 70% single occupant motor vehicle in 1998 to 65% alternate modes of transport in 2008. The recently inaugurated Rapid Transit lanes from Downsview Station to the Keele campus and two forthcoming subway stations promise an even more sustainable transportation profile for the University.

York's sustainability achievements to date are a point of pride for the University. The recommendations proposed in this report advance York's sustainability profile even further, and to respond to sustainability challenges that have not yet been addressed. The 39 recommendations are organized around four central sustainability themes: organizational structure, curriculum, social justice and human rights, and campus operations and development. These recommendations also fall into two broad orientations, relating to sustainability policy and operational systems, summarized as follows:

### **Policy recommendations**

- Develop a York University policy statement on sustainability.
- Establish a community of Campus Sustainability Ambassadors.
- Request that the Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee (APPRC) and the Vice-President Academic and Provost make sustainability a major strategic feature in the White Paper and the new University Academic Plan.
- Include sustainability in more courses and academic programs throughout the University.
- Develop a York-specific green standard for the development and construction of all new buildings and building renovations.
- Establish policies and practices to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants from vehicles, for example through establishment and enforcement of a "no idling" policy for all vehicles on York's campuses.
- Develop a York University policy or framework aimed at governing campus food service operations in a more coordinated fashion that enables and supports the

implementation of sustainable practices at a much greater degree than is presently possible.

### **Recommendations regarding University programs and practices**

- Establish opportunities for broad-based discussion of this report, including opportunities for constructive feedback.

#### *A. Sustainability and organizational structure*

- Include the Senior Manager, Environmental Design & Sustainability in the Sustainability Council membership
- Dedicate resources to the Sustainability Council to enable fulfillment of its objects
- Establish a formal role for the Yorkw!se program in relation to the Sustainability Council.
- Continue to develop and implement opportunities for student engagement in collaboration with the Student Sustainability Sub-Committee.
- Undertake and support a Sustainability Assessment Project.
- Engage a review of sustainability administration models across Canadian and international institutions of higher education, with a view to identifying the most suitable model for York.

#### *B. Sustainability in the curriculum*

- Develop a greater focus on sustainability in the York curriculum.
- Work with the relevant faculty members/offices to design and implement a survey about sustainability within the existing York curriculum.
- Encourage and support the development of non-degree offerings in sustainability.
- Provide students with more opportunities to do research and work on campus sustainability projects.

#### *C. Social justice and human rights*

- Enhance York's resource commitment to existing initiatives such as those identified in the Inventory of Community Engagement (Office of University Events and Community Relations)
- Improve access to York facilities such as the library system, buildings, and sports complexes and laboratories. In particular, a number of days each year should be designated as "community use days" for specified facilities (with streamlined approval process and waived or significantly reduced fees for facility use).
- Assess and develop outreach initiatives to attract qualified applicants for part-time and full-time employment from communities-in-need surrounding York.
- Through the York Foundation encourage donor programs that enhance bursaries and awards for local residents.

- Encourage deliberate outreach efforts with local secondary schools by each Faculty and department.
- Coordinate bridging and transitional programs and explore opportunities for ongoing budget support to these programs.
- Support and implement the policies of the updated York University Secondary Plan, specifically as they relate to housing, community services and facilities.
- Support the ongoing work of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights and help bridge this work with York's sustainability initiatives.

#### *D) Campus operations and development*

- Establish an institution-wide program that enhances "e-waste" recycling practices in all academic departments and administrative units, and locate drop boxes throughout the Keele and Glendon campuses to facilitate broader community participation.
- Identify and implement policies, plans and incentives to substantially reduce the consumption of paper at York by adopting practices of double-sided printing on all multiple-paged documents and encouraging students to print and submit double sided papers and assignments.
- Implement a clear, comprehensive and coordinated program that is aimed at increasing the level of recycling and composting.
- Provide a larger selection of products made from 100% recycled materials in the University Bookstore.
- Establish a program to reuse office furniture, when/where feasible, and if not, items should be offered by sale/donation to the York community, community charities, and organizations
- Support (and if possible increase support for) organizations focused on traffic demand management, the promotion of transit use and other alternate modes of transportation, and like sustainable transportation initiatives.
- Develop a University food services policy that protects the investments made in campus food operations by restricting on-campus catering and food service provision to caterers and food service providers that are contracted, permitted or otherwise authorized by the University's Food Services office.
- Improve the University's marketing of the range of available food services on both campuses, for example through website improvements, and better signage.
- Expand and enhance the availability of sitting/common space for use by students (both indoors and outdoors) and improve access to microwaves, water-bottle refilling stations and sinks for those that bring food from home or want to refill water bottles.
- Compile and analyze studies of the natural features of the University's two campuses, establish a York inventory of natural features and develop a comprehensive plan for protecting and enhancing York's endowment of natural features.
- Continue to develop ecologically progressive plans and procedures to guide campus landscaping and grounds management practices.

- Integrate relevant research and studies into grounds management and other areas of campus operations by establishing formal opportunities with straightforward processes for the engagement of students (for example, through course-related research projects, internships, paid work, or volunteer opportunities).
- Continue to position the University to manage its carbon footprint more effectively through the implementation of the energy management program and other initiatives; and expand efforts to engage the community in prudent energy conservation practices in order to sustain, and possibly improve, the targeted reduction in energy consumption and emissions.

## **Report of the President's Sustainability Council, 3 February 2010**

### **CONTENTS**

	<b>page</b>
1. The President's Sustainability Council mandate, planning process and vision	<b>7</b>
2. Principles of campus sustainability: higher education and sustainable futures	<b>10</b>
3. The President's Sustainability Council Student Sub-Committee	<b>13</b>
4. Recommendations	<b>16</b>
A. Sustainability and Organizational Structure	<b>16</b>
B. Sustainability in the Curriculum	<b>18</b>
C. Social justice and human rights	<b>20</b>
D. Campus operations and development	<b>21</b>
5. Short, medium and long-term recommendations	<b>27</b>
6. Acknowledgements	<b>30</b>

### **Appendices**

*Appendix A: Inventory of Internal and External Sustainability-Related Groups at York*

*Appendix B: Inventory of Student Sustainability Groups*

*Appendix C: Campus Services & Business Operations Sustainability Initiatives – March 2009*

*Appendix D: Inventory of Community Engagement (from the Office of University Events and Community Relations)*

## **Report of the President's Sustainability Council, 3 February 2010**

### **1. The President's Sustainability Council mandate, planning process and vision**

In July 2008 York President Mamdouh Shoukri struck the President's Sustainability Council with the following mandate:

The Sustainability Council is an advisory body to the President with responsibility for providing input on York University's sustainability initiatives, projects, and practices. It is also a mechanism through which to support and enable York students, faculty and staff to participate meaningfully in the planning and implementation of York University's sustainability policies, initiatives, projects and practices. It will serve to foster the integration of knowledge and issues about sustainability into research, education and application.

The Sustainability Council will operate in an atmosphere of collegial co-operation, where all participants respect each others' participation through sharing of expertise, information and strategies. Specifically, the Sustainability Council will:

1. Develop a framework for understanding the different dimensions of sustainability as relevant to the University's campuses;
2. Conduct a sustainability audit to establish a common understanding and benchmarks;
3. Provide a forum in which members may discuss sustainability challenges and opportunities and establish a pan-university approach to sustainability initiatives;
4. Identify and review current university sustainability practices and ascertain opportunities for synergies;
5. Through a planning/prioritization process, identify and examine specific high priority issues and develop recommendations for the President to consider implementing;
6. Develop a communication tool that will serve as a focal point for sustainability activities and initiatives at York; and
7. Produce an annual report on sustainability at York relative to the Council's activities.

Membership on the 2008-2009 President's Sustainability Council includes the following people:

Victoria Barnett (beginning July 2009)  
Student representative

Dawn Bazely  
Associate Professor, Department of Biology  
Director, institute for Research in Sustainability

Gary H. Brewer  
Vice-President Finance & Administration

Steve Dranitsaris  
Senior Executive Officer  
Office of the Vice-President Finance and Administration

Jennifer Foster (chair)  
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies  
Coordinator, Urban Ecologies Certificate

Bryan Husted (beginning August 2009)  
Erivan K. Haub Chair in Business and Sustainability  
Director, Center of Excellence in Responsible Business  
Schulich School of Business

Imran Kaderdina  
Student representative

Brian Kelly (until May 2009)  
Director, Sustainable Enterprise Academy  
Erivan K. Haub Program in Business and Sustainability  
Schulich School of Business

Rhonda Lenton (beginning June 2009)  
Associate Vice-President Academic

Fernando Lucadomo (since October 2009)  
Student representative

Jean-Sébastien Marier (until August 2009)  
Student representative

Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues  
Senior Executive Officer  
Office of the President

Ross McMillan  
Assistant Director  
Student Community Centre for Student Community & Leadership Development

Hamid Osman (until May 2009)  
President  
York Federation of Students

Barbara Rahder  
Dean  
Faculty of Environmental Studies

Krisna Saravanamuttu (beginning May 2009)  
President  
York Federation of Students

Robert J. Tiffin  
Vice-President Students

Daniela Trapani  
Administrative Assistant  
Office of the President

Rodney A. Webb (until June 2009)  
Professor and Associate Vice-President Academic

Christopher R. Wong  
Director, Transportation and Master Planning  
York University Development Corporation



Since its inception, the Council has met 12 times. The minutes of these meetings are posted on the Sustainability Council website ([www.yorku.ca/susweb](http://www.yorku.ca/susweb)). Members have participated in a series of workshops and presentations related to campus sustainability themes, such as the Canadian Association of University Business Officers' *Leadership for Sustainability in Higher Education: Taking an Institutional Approach* workshop. They have also conducted many meetings with people who have issue-specific knowledge and experience. Meanwhile, since the outset a Student Sub-Committee with open membership has also met regularly with a view to ensuring that the specific concerns and priorities of York's student body are integrated into a sustainability strategy.

The primary focus of the Sustainability Council has been developing a framework for understanding the role of sustainability and envisioning directions for advancing sustainability at York. Beginning in October 2008 the Council followed a consensus-based planning process to identify four key themes that capture the broad scope of sustainability issues at York. These are: organizational structure; curriculum; campus operations and development; and social justice and human rights. Each theme became the focus of a working group, coordinated respectively by McMillan and Maxwell Rodrigues, Webb, Dranitsaris and Wong, and Marier and Foster. Beginning in March 2009, the working groups engaged in research, consultation and analysis of their particular themes. Monthly discussions of each working group's progress and findings culminated in determination of the recommendations presented in this report. At the same time, the Council also prepared an inventory of internal and external sustainability-related groups at York, coordinated by Maxwell Rodrigues.

Two consultative sessions were organized to introduce the Sustainability Council's mandate, findings to date and preliminary recommendations. First, a two-hour open forum for York students was held in September 2009, where members presented the Council vision on sustainability and received substantive input from students. This session was complimented by opportunities for electronic input from students through a comments box on the Council web page and an invitation to submit comments directly to the Chair or on the Student Sub-Committee Facebook group. Next a selection of Council members presented the vision and preliminary recommendations at the October 2009 Deans' Meeting with York's Vice-President Academic & Provost. Input from these two consultative sessions has been incorporated into the Council's recommended approach to sustainability.

The Sustainability Council proposes a vision of sustainability for York University that combines acute concern for the ecological, social and economic dimensions of campus life. There are innumerable definitions of sustainability, producing considerable confusion regarding the purposes, scope and implementation of this concept. Rather than rely on an existing definition, the Council recommends that York adopt a vision unique to York's exceptional circumstances, particular strengths and specific challenges. The Council proposes the following as a vision statement for sustainability at York:

*Our vision of a sustainable university is one that enhances the ecological functioning of its campuses; provides equitable access to opportunities for active engagement in life-long learning; creates knowledgeable, active and responsible global citizens; and does so within an integrated, long-term framework of full-cost economic and environmental accounting.*

## **2. Principles of campus sustainability: higher education and sustainable futures**

The Council finds that York is already heavily engaged in sustainability thinking and action, and has been for a long time. In fact, in many instances the Council finds that York has been a pioneering among post-secondary institutions in promoting sustainability's three pillars of environment, equity and economy, often far exceeding conventional norms and standards. The University's strengths in interdisciplinarity, innovation and progressive thinking have served us well in this respect. However, this work has not been envisioned or presented as a coherent university-wide sustainability strategy.

The range of sustainability commitments at York is vast. For example, Campus Services and Business Operations (CSBO) now includes an Office of Environmental Design and Sustainability, and each unit within CSBO has integrated sustainability into its ongoing work. The University has developed Yorkw!se, a campaign to raise awareness of sustainability and quality of life at York. Sustainability also remains a strong scholarly and research theme at York, for instance through curricula in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, the Schulich School's Business and Environment Graduate Diploma, and the Departments of Biology and Geography. Many York faculty members hold Tri-Council awards focusing on sustainability themes, and the Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability leads on-campus sustainability research and facilitates bringing prominent sustainability figures together to collaborate in diverse venues across disciplinary boundaries. York has made important advances in the social dimensions of sustainability, for instance by adopting a workplace code of conduct for its trademark licensees, launching the York University – TD Community Engagement Centre, and adhering to socially responsible investment policies. The following documents offer a sample illustration of the extensive range of sustainability initiatives at York:

*Inventory of Internal and External Sustainability-Related Groups at York* (Appendix A)

*Inventory of Student Sustainability Groups* (Appendix B)

*Campus Services & Business Operations Sustainability Initiatives – March 2009*  
<http://www.yorku.ca/vpfa/documents/CSBOSustainabilityReport.pdf> (Appendix C)

*Inventory of Community Engagement* (from the Office of University Events and Community Relations) (Appendix D)

York's broad range of initiatives has not been organized as a pan-university approach to building sustainable futures for current generations and those to come. While the University has a number of policies that may be linked to sustainability, there is no overarching policy framework in which the pillars or tenants of sustainability exist at York. The concept of sustainability is not formally integrated into the University governance structures and plans – for example, the University Academic Plan and the Faculty/unit plans being developed as part of the University's Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) processes. While numerous sectors across the University are engaged in sustainability efforts, they are not known, shared or communicated effectively to the internal and external community.

As York develops a coherent sustainability strategy, the following principles, adapted from Wheeler<sup>1</sup>, help define the qualities and aims of a York approach to sustainability:

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<sup>1</sup> Wheeler, Stephen W. 2004. *Planning for Sustainability: Creating Livable, Equitable and Ecological Communities* (London: Routledge)

a) long-term perspective

Planning and decision-making at York should reflect a long-term, multi-generational perspective on sustainability. While shorter planning cycles of 5-10 years may be necessary for operational decision-making, these must be couched within goals, objectives and plans that span multiple decades and generations. In some cases, this may compel shorter-term decisions that are financially burdensome or temporarily unpopular. The benefits of some sustainability plans may not be realized over the short-term or even within our own lifetimes. But a long-term perspective on sustainability that maintains an integrated framework of full-cost economic and environmental accounting that includes social equity and human rights is essential to York's future.

b) holistic outlook

In order to merge ecological, social and economic concerns, York must adhere to whole systems thinking. This means approaching problems by considering multi-layered causes, beyond the boundaries of immediate situations. Rather than merely addressing the symptoms of problems, a holistic outlook requires attention to the connections and interplay among varied sustainability challenges, across disciplinary boundaries and administrative units. A holistic outlook may require more time and resources than narrow perspectives, and it may also require deeper commitment to problem-solving and more profound thinking. The benefits of a holistic outlook will certainly strengthen York's ability to shape an environmentally robust, economically resilient and socially equitable institution.

c) acceptance of limits

Acceptance of limits to growth and development is about learning to live within means, to find creative and innovative ways to achieve the University's mission and goals without compromising the social, economic and environmental conditions. Popular ways of conceptualizing this include the ideas of a carbon footprint or an ecological footprint. In York's case, acceptance of limits may entail strategies for compact development in land use planning, conserving natural spaces, efficient use and reuse of water and energy, durable and recyclable building materials, reducing material consumption on campus, minimizing waste, being mindful of the limitations and challenges experienced by different social groups, and ensuring financial mechanisms are in place to maintain sustainability programs and projects.

d) focus on place

A focus on place is a key tenet of sustainability planning. This is paramount to nurturing York's distinctiveness as a large institution of higher learning with a main campus in the very heart of the Greater Toronto Area. By emphasizing connections to the local landscape, York is also building on its own strengths as a university, expressed through a mission statement describing York as a "community of faculty, students and staff committed to academic freedom, social justice, accessible education, and collegial self-governance." A focus on place necessarily draws attention to the role that York may play in safeguarding local ecosystems at both the Keele and Glendon campuses, by reducing environmental impacts and restoring damage. It also entails a commitment to reducing local social inequities and to engaging with local economies. York is largely viewed as a "commuter campus" where people do not maintain a connection to the institution's physical infrastructure. By sustaining a focus on place the University may open new channels for building

more meaningful relationships within its own setting, relationships that will have deeply positive social, economic and environmental impacts.

e) active involvement in problem-solving

In order to challenge the status quo and enhance York's standard of sustainability, the University must actively and constructively nurture broad-based participation in ongoing planning. The best sustainability solutions typically derive from understanding the nuanced needs and desires of all actors, including experts who may have technical or professional knowledge and non-experts who have lived experiences and ongoing interaction with the University. Particular attention should be devoted to including those with underrepresented points-of-view. Active involvement is critical to all stages of planning, beginning with problem definition. If York is to proceed in sustainable ways, interpretations of sustainability should incorporate not only the views of York community members, but also those of University partners and neighbours who inevitably interact with and are affected by the University's plans.

As vital centres for learning and the advancement of knowledge, universities are uniquely positioned to be sustainability leaders. The sustainability questions that are pursued in classrooms and the analytical inquiries that are investigated in scholarly research will form the basis through which sustainability is comprehended, valued and enacted. York certainly has the potential to become a distinguished leader in the advancement of sustainability knowledge. Yet York's potential for sustainability leadership is even more profound. With 90 buildings, 1,700 daily public bus visits and two forthcoming subway stations, its own energy co-generation facility, more than 40 food service outlets and numerous significant natural features, York is functionally similar to a small city. The University is a major employer in the Greater Toronto Area. During peak academic seasons, over 60,000 people use the campus daily. The Keele campus is also proximate to one of Toronto's "communities in need" with the city's highest proportion of children and youth. The sustainability challenge for York is to identify an integrative approach to curriculum, research and operations within this complex and spatially extensive setting.

### **3. The President's Sustainability Council Student Sub-Committee**

The Student Sub-Committee has worked to identify sustainability priorities for students and mobilize student action on sustainability. A variety of student groups with sustainability interests exist on campus, for example ECO (formerly the Environmental Outreach Team), OPIRG York, and the Bachelor of Environmental Studies Students Association. Many student groups have demonstrated outstanding leadership through their sustainability accomplishments. For instance, the Maloca Community Garden has organized individual and collective organic plots on the Keele campus for over a decade; Healthy Food Initiatives @ York serves healthy, affordable, and sustainably-produced food to York students and community members; and the Sustainable Purchasing Coalition helped to establish no-sweat policies for all York-licensed products. Many thousand students are enrolled in degree programs, diplomas and certificates focusing on sustainability themes, such as those offered through the Faculty of Environmental Studies, the Schulich School of Business or the Faculty of Education. Clearly, there is strong interest in sustainability among York students.

Much of the energy for establishing the President's Sustainability Council derived from student interest. The most recent precursor to the President's Sustainability Council was an advisory body to the Vice-President Students and Vice-President Finance and Administration. Shifting the Council into the President's Office was a means to respond to the breadth of sustainability issues on campus, enabling the Council to address a broader scale that incorporates the full contingent of University concerns. While the Council's mandate is to establish a pan-University approach to sustainability, in order to ensure that student interests are clearly distinguished and understood the Student Sub-Committee works in concert with the Council.

Open to all York students, the Student Sub-Committee is represented by four elected members who also sit on the Sustainability Council. The four seats were voted at the first meeting, in September 2008, where it was also determined that one seat would be reserved for the President of the York Federation of Students. Participation in the Student Sub-Committee has, unfortunately, been patchy. While thirteen students attended the first meeting, two or three students only attended some of the later meetings. More recent meetings in the fall 2009 have been attended by up to 23 students.

The Student Sub-Committee has met twelve times. Working groups have also met at various points since the fall 2008. In the summer 2009 students established a Facebook group as a means of exchanging information and networking, such that they would not have to depend on live meetings or the Student Sub-Committee list-serve to communicate. A two-hour open forum was held in September 2009, where the mandate, vision and general directions and ideas of the Council were presented and discussed with students. Students who could not attend the open forum were encouraged to submit electronic input, through email exchange, a comment box on the Sustainability Council website, or through the Student Sub-Committee Facebook group.

The focus of the Student Sub-Committee evolved during its first year. Similar to the Sustainability Council, a brainstorming exercise was conducted at the outset of the Sub-Committee's foundation to determine concerns that are uppermost from student points-of-view. Four working groups were then established with volunteer coordinators. The focus of working groups included themes of food, transportation, waste and student consultation. These groups met to research and discuss relevant themes, and consulted with key administrative actors related to food, transportation and waste. The groups

reported back to the Student Sub-Committee, but after a series of Sub-Committee meetings unattended by people associated with the working groups a decision was made within the Sub-Committee to focus on new projects, in particular a video project that could engage students and draw attention to sustainability concerns at York.

The types of sustainability interests that students have affirmed through the Student Sub-Committee have remained broad yet consistent through the first year. At the first meeting students identified interest in matters such as readily accessible healthy foods, work-study opportunities in the field of sustainability, composting and sustainable waste management systems, and increased availability of Las Nubes coffee. These themes were echoed through to the September 2009 open forum, attended by approximately fifteen students (with eight additional electronic submissions). Through the open forum process students identified the following as important sustainability directions for York:

- expanding sustainability themes throughout University curricula
- improving accessibility to sustainability-related courses
- expanding and improving opportunities for work/study placements related to sustainability
- ensuring that sustainability is incorporated throughout York's identity, programs and operations in an interdisciplinary and holistic manner
- enhancing instructors' and Faculty members' appreciation of the importance of sustainability
- establishing a full-time sustainability coordinator for York
- establishing a Sustainability Office at York with a resource centre
- increasing York's sustainability profile, for example by hosting national conferences on sustainability
- working with Metrolinx to create a student "U-Pass"
- establishing a campus ride-share program
- following LEED building standards or a York-specific standard with comparable or more rigorous criterion
- preserving and enhancing the ecological management of York's woodlots
- promoting Las Nubes coffee both as a means of furthering sustainability on campus and as a York emblem more widely
- expanding availability of Las Nubes coffee throughout the University and especially in high-traffic areas, for example by establishing a permanent Las Nubes vending station in York Lanes
- expanding research opportunities in relation to Las Nubes coffee
- situating more composting facilities within the vicinity of food outlets
- developing a clearer understanding of how York is perceived by neighboring communities and identify ways to welcome local communities

Despite uneven participation in the Student Sub-Committee, the students who have been involved demonstrate resolve to continue engaging the York student body in sustainability issues and strategic processes. The October 2009 meeting of the Student

Sub-Committee was attended by over 20 students, and many more joined the electronic communications circuits of the Sub-Committee through outreach efforts at the September 2009 Business and Society symposium on sustainable purchasing policies. New directions for the Student Sub-Committee include shifting to a co-chair model led by students; expanding outreach efforts; incorporating more opportunities for student leadership in the Sub-Committee (for example, by assigning full responsibility for reporting to students); advancing the Fair Trade Purchasing Policy prepared by the Sustainable Purchasing Coalition; and continuing to explore student needs, priorities and preferred sustainability directions.

## 4. Recommendations

In 2001 the President's Task Force on Sustainability, chaired by Professor Peter Victor, submitted a report entitled *Sustainability on the Keele Campus: The Story So Far*. This report offers a profile of sustainability practices at York as well as recommendations for further action. The Sustainability Council has carefully reviewed this report, and finds many points of convergence in its recommendations, yet also suggests several new emphases in York's sustainability strategy.

The following recommendations are grouped thematically according to the Council's four priority themes of: a) organizational structure; b) curriculum; c) social justice and human rights; and d) campus operations and development. They are conceived as ways to build on the University's impressive record of sustainability to date and expand into new and important sustainability concerns that have not yet been explored. Some recommendations require further study, others may be acted upon more readily. The Council proposes these as the foundation for a comprehensive sustainability strategy that is specific to York's needs, priorities and strengths. The recommendations are presented as initiatives and actions that could be implemented over the short term (12 months), medium term (1 to 3 years) and longer term (3+ years). The Council is aware that the University currently is in a period of resource contraction across divisions with limited flexibility, and proposes these recommendations in the spirit of a long-term, holistic perspective on York's future.

The Council recommends a commitment to sustainability at York that incorporates broad-based involvement across the University. As a means of encouraging dialogue about sustainability at York, the Council encourages open discussion of this report. Not only will this enhance awareness of sustainability accomplishments at the University, but it will also help build understanding of the complex challenges ahead. Opportunities for nurturing involvement might include wide-ranging distribution of the report, encouraging discussion in Senate, and encouraging Deans to consult with Faculty Councils.

*Recommendation #1: Establish opportunities for broad-based discussion of this report, including opportunities for constructive feedback.*

### A. Sustainability and organizational structure

#### University statement on sustainability

While numerous areas do have unit-based procedures and practices there currently is no policy framework that exists in relation to sustainability. To elevate the awareness and demonstrate support at the highest levels, the University should issue a statement on sustainability that includes:

- York's vision or definition of sustainability
- Responsibilities and accountabilities
- Reporting framework and commitments

*Recommendation #2: Develop a York University policy statement on sustainability.*

#### President's Sustainability Council

The Senior Manager, Environmental Design & Sustainability, in the Department of Campus Services and Business Operations, coordinates sustainability initiatives for one of the largest divisions on campus, and is also the Chair of Yorkwise (an awareness campaign that promotes behavioral changes in support of campus stewardship and



sustainability). Given this individual's expected interaction with users it is important that s/he becomes a member of the Sustainability Council. The Council could also better fulfill its mandate with set resources, including funds to attend workshops and conferences, such as those offered by the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). Staff support for research, outreach, consultation logistics and communications is also important. While the Faculty of Environmental Studies has supported the Council with a dedicated Graduate Assistant position in the fall/winter 2008/09 and 2009/10 term, it is important that more formalized support be secured.

*Recommendation #3: Include the Senior Manager, Environmental Design & Sustainability in the Sustainability Council membership*

*Recommendation #4: Dedicate resources to the Sustainability Council to enable fulfillment of its objects.*

#### Enhancing the linkages between faculty, students and staff

The Yorkw!se program has the potential to take a primary leadership role in the outreach and communication of sustainability initiatives at York. To date, it has not worked closely with the Council in crafting stewardship plans and enhancing sustainability linkages across the University. Another opportunity to enhance linkages is through Campus Sustainability Ambassadors. These could be students, staff and faculty members who serve as local sustainability champions to promote sustainability activities and bring forth ideas of better practices that could be implemented in the University. This group might be coordinated through Yorkw!se and utilize campus experts for implementation (including, for example, members of IRIS, CSBO, and York's Faculties).

Given the success of York's Res Race to Zero (a 26% decrease in electricity use in 8 undergraduate residences during March 2009), expanding the Residence Environmental Ambassador program to a full year program (in cooperation with Campus Services and Business Operations, Student Community and Community Development and Housing Services) is an effective means of encouraging sustainable choices. Where possible, a peer-based model that directly engages students in paid, volunteer and academic opportunities to advance sustainability at York should be pursued.

*Recommendation #5: Establish a formal role for the Yorkw!se program in relation to the Sustainability Council.*

*Recommendation #6: Establish a community of Campus Sustainability Ambassadors.*

*Recommendation #7: Continue to develop and implement opportunities for student engagement in collaboration with the Student Sustainability Sub-Committee.*

#### Sustainability assessment project

In order to establish a full and common level of understanding of York's relationship to sustainability, the University should undertake a sustainability assessment project. There are numerous existing models that the University may utilize (for instance, the AASHE's STARS program or the Sierra Youth Coalition's Campus Sustainability Assessment Framework). A multidisciplinary work team that includes students, faculty and staff should be formed to conduct the assessment. It is essential that the assessment team includes a representative from the University's Internal Audit Department. Important steps in this process include establishing a timeline, reviewing and selecting of a model and implementing the assessment.

*Recommendation #8: Undertake and support a Sustainability Assessment Project.*

### Sustainability model review

In order to ensure thorough consultation, analysis and planning for the University's organizational structure in relation to a sustainability strategy, the working group focusing on organizational structure should continue to investigate and assess different administrative models for campus sustainability through the 2009-2010 academic year. This working group should specifically engage a comparative study of different models of sustainability administration at other universities, including a focus on approaches to integration across divisions. An inventory of internal and external sustainability-related groups at York has already been developed by the Sustainability Council, and this should serve as an important foundation for charting a sustainability model at the University. It is also important that potential models are considered in relation to the University's strategic and budget planning for 2010-2011.

*Recommendation #9: Engage a review of sustainability administration models across Canadian and international institutions of higher education, with a view to identifying the most suitable model for York.*

## **B. Sustainability in the curriculum**

### The University Academic Plan

Developing a greater focus on sustainability in the curriculum at York University will help students become more conscious, involved, and responsible global citizens.

Corporate Knights annually ranks Canadian university programs based on how well they integrate environmental and social issues into their programs overall. Among the programs reviewed in 2008-09, Schulich ranked first among business schools, Osgoode ranked second among law schools, and the Faculty of Education ranked sixth among teacher education programs. Among programs reviewed in 2007-08, the Faculty of Environmental Studies ranked second among those offering planning programs.

The sixth annual *Knight Schools* report (2009) states:

*It has become clear that there is room for sustainability in every field. These programs turn out professionals who will oversee projects, manage companies, and teach our children. The programs students are enrolled in now will have an impact on the shape of the world tomorrow.*

It is clear that York already emphasizes sustainability in many courses and programs. It is equally clear that we can and should do more. While sustainability is one of York University's priority research areas, it is not yet a major focus of the UAP. Just as the greening of the campus is a high priority in the community, the expansion of courses and programs on sustainability should be a priority in the academic realm. By emphasizing sustainability in the UAP, York signals to students, faculty, staff, and to the outside world, that we are collectively committed to creating a more equitable, just, and sustainable world.

The Vice-President Academic and Provost has also initiated a White Paper process to develop, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, a vision for York University for the next 15-20 years. The White Paper affords an opportunity to reflect on and integrate sustainability as a strategic priority.

*Recommendation #10: Request that the Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee (APPRC) and the Vice-President Academic and Provost make sustainability a major strategic feature in the White Paper and the new University Academic Plan.*

*Recommendation #11: Develop a greater focus on sustainability in the York curriculum.*

#### Knowing ourselves

The current UAP asked a simple but significant question: Do we know ourselves well enough? The answer is we do not. Some Canadian universities have done surveys to determine which of their courses have a significant emphasis on sustainability. For example, UBC has identified over 400 such courses. York University should do a similar survey—using an instrument like Survey Monkey—to find out what courses we already offer that focus on, have a significant emphasis on, or simply touch on sustainability.

Consultations should be undertaken with appropriate faculty members and/or offices at York (for example, the Chair of Senate, the Director of the Institute for Social Research, and the Faculties) to develop a survey proposal. The findings from such a survey should be widely shared and discussed in order to better promote what we are already offering, as well as to encourage new and more innovative ways of including sustainability in courses and programs.

*Recommendation #12: Work with the relevant faculty members/offices to design and implement a survey about sustainability within the existing York curriculum.*

#### Curricula development

Most undergraduate degrees at York require courses in General Education to broaden the outlook of our students and encourage them to develop critical thinking and effective communication skills. Units that offer General Education courses should offer some focused on or related to sustainability. Some elements of sustainability could be included in every program. Joint programs, such as the graduate diplomas in Business and the Environment and Environmental/Sustainability Education, could be expanded. New joint programs, such as in Environmental Health and Environmental Engineering, should be explored.

*Recommendation #13: Include sustainability in more courses and academic programs throughout the University.*

#### Non-degree studies

There is increasing interest in sustainability among people who wish to upgrade their skills or professional qualifications. York should respond by developing more non-degree studies like the proposed course in Sustainability for Human Resource Professionals developed by IRIS. Non-degree studies courses could also provide much needed additional revenue for York. Given the increasing emphasis on sustainability in schools, the Faculty of Education could offer more non-degree studies for teachers and school boards through its Additional Qualifications courses. Similarly, the Faculty of Environmental Studies could offer special professional development courses for urban planners and others. More collaborative efforts should also be encouraged using expertise in two or more Faculties.

*Recommendation #14: Encourage and support the development of non-degree offerings in sustainability.*

#### Experiential learning

Many people learn by doing. Providing more opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience doing research or taking part in sustainability projects on York's campuses would be an excellent way to demonstrate the University's commitment to sustainability and to educating its students about sustainability. These opportunities could take different forms: as courses for credit, as internships or field experience opportunities for credit, or as paid or volunteer work experience. Examples of areas that might expand opportunities to students are the Faculties, Department of Campus Services & Business Operations (CSBO), Yorkwise, and IRIS.

*Recommendation #15: Provide students with more opportunities to do research and work on campus sustainability projects.*

### **C. Social justice and human rights**

#### Institutional support for links with York's neighbours

York has the potential to be a leader in establishing constructive and sustainable links with its local communities, especially given the groundswell of initiatives that have already proven successful. Many excellent programs, projects and efforts exist to build and nurture links with York's neighbours, and these could offer outstanding benefits to York with enhanced institutional commitment. Most initiatives depend on support from the York University Faculty Association and outside groups to fund community links, creating programming challenges associated with short or unstable funding cycles. Many also experience difficulty accessing York facilities for partnership work. Central mechanisms for support would have a positive impact on the sustainability of York's links with its local communities.

*Recommendation #16: Enhance York's resource commitment to existing initiatives such as those identified in the Inventory of Community Engagement (Office of University Events and Community Relations)*

*Recommendation #17: Improve access to York facilities such as the library system, buildings, and sports complexes and laboratories. In particular, a number of days each year should be designated as "community use days" for specified facilities (with streamlined approval process and waived or significantly reduced fees for facility use).*

#### Create York employment opportunities for local residents

Creating opportunities for members of the University's local communities to participate in the York University Temporary Agency (YUTA) hiring processes stands out as a critical means of fostering a focus on place, enhancing social equity and sustainable livelihoods, and tempering York's reputation as a "commuter campus" that is remote and requires extensive travel. Not only would this provide otherwise unavailable quality employment opportunities at a leading institution, it may also furnish York with a sustainable supply of talent from a local pool.

*Recommendation #18: Assess and develop outreach initiatives to attract qualified applicants for part-time and full-time employment from communities-in-need surrounding York.*

#### Improve accessibility of a York education for the University's neighbours

York's Keele Campus is situated close to a neighbourhood experiencing one of Toronto's highest proportions of youth, sole-supported families, refugees and

immigrants, low-income earners and public housing tenants. The rate of post-secondary education in the neighbourhood surrounding York is relatively low, and opportunities for training in the trades are far more prevalent than opportunities for a university education. York should promote accessibility for local students in every way possible, again as a means of fostering a focus on place, enhancing social equity and sustainable livelihoods, and tempering York's reputation as a "commuter campus" that is remote and requires extensive travel.

*Recommendation #19: Through the York Foundation encourage donor programs that enhance bursaries and awards for local residents.*

*Recommendation #20: Encourage deliberate outreach efforts with local secondary schools by each Faculty and department.*

*Recommendation #21: Coordinate bridging and transitional programs and explore opportunities for ongoing budget support to these programs.*

#### Set socially equitable conditions for future land uses

York's close proximity to one of Toronto's "communities in need", together with its supply of development land, places it in the unique position of being a potential provider of diverse and affordable housing. Through collaborations with the City of Toronto in the preparation of a new Secondary Plan for the Keele campus, York supports the notion of creating a "complete community" on its development lands over time, in conjunction with the expansion of the University-Spadina subway line onto campus. To this end, a diversity of housing types and tenures will be sought within the Secondary Plan area, accompanied by a range of community services and facilities to ensure the social, economic and environmental health of the area.

*Recommendation #22: Support and implement the policies of the updated York University Secondary Plan, specifically as they relate to housing, community services and facilities.*

#### Bridge York's human rights policies and programs with sustainability initiatives

There is a network of groups, policies and programs that offer support for human rights at York University. For example, the Centre for Human Rights ensures adherence to the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. York upholds an *Employment Equity Policy*, as well as policies relating to academic accommodation for students with disabilities and accommodation in employment for persons with disabilities. The position of York Ombudsperson has been established to ensure fair implementation of York policies for all York members. The university also maintains policies of socially responsible investing that include governance structures for determining where York invests its money.

*Recommendation #23: Support the ongoing work of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights and help bridge this work with York's sustainability initiatives.*

### **D) Campus operations and development**

As reported for the past several years in the University's Planning, Budget and Accountability Report, York's Department of Campus Services and Business Operations (CSBO) has adopted a number of standardized procedures and practices aimed at effectively reducing York's ecological footprint. Among its initiatives are:

- an energy management program, which aims to reduce energy consumption by 25% over five years by implementing a significant number of energy conservation measures in campus buildings and the central utilities infrastructure;
- a sustainability building strategy and green solutions in renovation projects;
- a transportation management program that has reduced the demand for parking and increased subscription to alternative sustainable methods of transportation such as public transit;
- extensive storm water management initiatives, including retention ponds, bio swales instead of storm sewers, use of porous paving (and stormceptors in parking lots), use of green roofs and removal of excessive paved areas;
- sustainable practices in grounds management that include increased naturalized open spaces, use of low maintenance shrubs, drought resistant and native plants, the use of mulch in planted areas for water retention and weed control, use of porous hard surface materials, reduction in chemical and pesticide use and migration to the use of organic fertilizer;
- a printing services operation that has acquired new, more energy efficient machinery, has received printer certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Canada, arranges a carbon offset for the production of course kits and offers the carbon neutral program to other printing on demand; and
- waste reduction and recycling programs, including co-mingling initiatives that have brought efficiencies to the collection and distribution of waste, paper, glass, metal and plastic materials, the tri bin system in indoor and outdoor applications, food digesters in close proximity to buildings to promote individual organic recycling, and organic collections within all main food service preparation areas.

The President's Sustainability Council applauds these and other sustainability initiatives in CSBO and urges the University to provide sufficient resources for these initiatives to continue and to reinvest all cost savings from these initiatives in further operational efficiencies and conservation measures.

Five areas of campus operations and development have been identified as the focus for additional recommendations:

#### Campus Buildings and Renovations

As previously mentioned, CSBO adopted a sustainable building strategy that considers design efficiency, target performance, water efficiency, energy conservation, reduction in emissions, materials and resources, green construction practices, indoor environmental quality and site re-naturalization. Design and development guidelines for renovation projects now incorporate a statement of commitment to sustainable solutions, and require due consideration to more energy efficient lighting retrofits and upgrades to HVAC, efficient water usage, use of VOC (volatile organic compounds) free materials, minimized inflexible interiors (use of partitions and open concept for office designs, where possible), use of light sensors, exterior sun shades and canopies. Particular attention is paid to the standardization of construction materials so as to improve operational efficiency over the life of the renovated area.

While York has adopted leading edge sustainable practices, there is mounting pressure to pursue LEED certification on major projects, often at such an expense that project scope and user requirements have to be reduced. A "York-specific" green standard should be established that would incorporate appropriate targets and requirements of

the LEED building certification program, the Toronto Green Building standards, and any other green building certification programs deemed appropriate, and that would be responsive to economic conditions and project financial feasibility. This is something that could potentially be done in conjunction with other Ontario universities. High profile experts could also be involved for qualitative validation of the standard.

*Recommendation #24: Develop a York-specific green standard for the development and construction of all new buildings and building renovations.*

#### Recycling and Waste Management

CSBO has made significant strides in diverting recyclable and reusable materials from landfills, through the introduction of tri-bin systems, conical digesters, and surplus asset disposal protocols, additional strategies and opportunities for recycling. There are also programs for collecting and recycling e-waste associated with University property such as computers. There is substantial opportunity to enhance these programs, to further reduce waste and divert from landfills, as well as extend programs to capture personal e-waste.

*Recommendation #25: Establish an institution-wide program that enhances “e-waste” recycling practices in all academic departments and administrative units, and locate drop boxes throughout the Keele and Glendon campuses to facilitate broader community participation.*

*Recommendation #26: Identify and implement policies, plans and incentives to substantially reduce the consumption of paper at York by adopting practices of double-sided printing on all multiple-paged documents and encouraging students to print and submit double sided papers and assignments.*

*Recommendation #27: Implement a clear, comprehensive and coordinated program that is aimed at increasing the level of recycling and composting.*

*Recommendation #28: Provide a larger selection of products made from 100% recycled materials in the University Bookstore.*

*Recommendation #29: Establish a program to reuse office furniture, when/where feasible, and if not, items should be offered by sale/donation to the York community, community charities, and organizations*

#### Transportation

Over the past decade, York University has been successful in dramatically changing the commuter modal split from approximately 70% single occupant motor vehicle in 1998 to 65% alternate modes of transport, primarily public transit, in 2008. With 1,700 transit buses on the Keele campus daily, there is now emerging concern about emissions from bus traffic and vehicular idling in general – although, much of the concern will be resolved by 2015 with the opening of the subway that will be extended from Downsview Station, through the campus into York Region and that will have most surface bus connections at stations outside of the University campus. Alternative modes of transportation such as cycling, car-pooling and car-sharing continue to be encouraged to further reduce single occupant motor vehicle use.

*Recommendation #30: Support (and if possible increase support for) organizations focused on traffic demand management, the promotion of transit use and other alternate modes of transportation, and like sustainable transportation initiatives.*

*Recommendation #31: Establish policies and practices to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants from vehicles, for example through establishment and enforcement of a “no idling” policy for all vehicles on York’s campuses.*

### Food

The Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability conducted a survey of York University community members in 2008-09, resulting in a June 2009 report titled “Examining Campus Food Sustainability at York University”. While focusing largely on waste produced by food providers on campus, the survey results provide evidence of a general desire for more varied food options (for instance, organics, local food, fair trade products, and alternative dietary options). Many of the types of foods requested by students in the IRIS report are actually available at numerous outlets across campus, including local produce and fair trade coffee. These themes were also reflected in discussions at meetings of the Student Sub-Committee working group on Food and Waste. The provision of all of these types of food options by the University would challenge the long-term economic sustainability of the campus food service operations that are overseen directly by the University – largely because of the earlier devolution of much of the campus food service delivery to the Student Centre, York Lanes and the Schulich School of Business. Creating a food services framework supported by policy and improved marketing and awareness will enable the University to leverage more effectively the types of sustainable food options and food procurement requirements for which the York community has articulated a strong desire. In this regard, the following recommendations of the IRIS report are also substantially advanced by the President’s Sustainability Council.

*Recommendation #32: Develop a York University policy or framework aimed at governing campus food service operations in a more coordinated fashion that enables and supports the implementation of sustainable practices at a much greater degree than is presently possible.*

*Recommendation #33: Develop a University food services policy that protects the investments made in campus food operations by restricting on-campus catering and food service provision to caterers and food service providers that are contracted, permitted or otherwise authorized by the University’s Food Services office.*

*Recommendation #34: Improve the University’s marketing of the range of available food services on both campuses, for example through website improvements, and better signage.*

An additional recommendation of the IRIS study is also being advanced in recognition of the intention to include the student experience as one of the pillars of the University White Paper process now underway, and in recognition of the related recommendations about student space contained in the recently released Task Force Report on Student Life, Learning and Community.

□ *Recommendation #35: Expand and enhance the availability of sitting/common space for use by students (both indoors and outdoors) and improve access to microwaves, water-bottle refilling stations and sinks for those that bring food from home or want to refill water bottles.*

### Natural Features and Grounds



As part of the recent review of the City of Toronto Secondary Plan for York's Keele campus, a report on Natural Heritage Features was completed with the participation of York members, and IRIS served on the local municipal Councilor's advisory committee. The report recommends the creation of land use policies that will protect and enhance these features. The Secondary Plan is a policy document and its zoning parameters will guide future land use on the Keele campus and will protect and enhance its natural features. The President's Sustainability Council supports in principle the preservation of the natural features of York University's two campuses as well as the adoption of comprehensive storm water management plans that consider the creeks, valley lands, woodlots, local habitats and other natural features, to be integrated with land use strategies and programs.

*Recommendation #36: Compile and analyze studies of the natural features of the University's two campuses, establish a York inventory of natural features and develop a comprehensive plan for protecting and enhancing York's endowment of natural features.*

Opportunities to adopt more sustainable, less energy-intensive and less costly approaches to grounds management could also be created by integrating research and studies (within Environmental Studies and Science & Engineering, for example) into Grounds plans, practices and procedures within the Department of Campus Services & Business Operations. It is recognized that operational procedures and practices at York have changed over the past few years to make landscaping much more ecologically sensitive and less resource intensive – with dramatic cutbacks in water use and the need for irrigation; a focus on planting native, drought-resistant plants; reduction in the use of chemical fertilizers; and introduction of naturalizing grassed areas (although this has to be balanced continuously with the community demand for outdoor recreational space and crime prevention guidelines on keeping grassy areas adjacent to pathways cut).

*Recommendation #37: Continue to develop ecologically progressive plans and procedures to guide campus landscaping and grounds management practices.*

*Recommendation #38: Integrate relevant research and studies into grounds management and other areas of campus operations by establishing formal opportunities with straightforward processes for the engagement of students (for example, through course-related research projects, internships, paid work, or volunteer opportunities).*

### Managing York's Carbon Footprint

York continues to implement a \$40 million energy management program, aimed at reducing energy consumptions by 25% and thereby significantly reducing green house gas emissions. Given the size of the University, this continues to represent the most significant undertaking in managing York's carbon footprint, but it is not the only initiative as it addresses infrastructure only. Work is required to engage York constituents on 'best practices' with respect to conservation. The "Res Race to Zero" was a pilot project for 8 undergraduate residences at the Keele campus in March 2009. It demonstrated that consumptions could be further influenced by programs of awareness and public engagement. With relatively simple support, including 'toolkits' and tips on best practices, the one-month pilot drove consumptions down by an average of 26%, and engaged residents in a way that demonstrated the willingness and enthusiasm of participants to reduce their carbon impact. Research also has been undertaken at the Keele campus to examine the capacity of open spaces to sequester carbon from all direct and indirect emissions. Carbon sequestration is the capture and secure storage of carbon dioxide that would otherwise be emitted into or remain in the atmosphere. Free

floating carbon can be converted to fixed-state through tree plantings, soil organic matter, perennial grass planting and other measures.

York has participated in carbon offsetting for certain events, services and ongoing operations. These have included the paper manufacturing and printing activities associated with course kit production at the Bookstores and Printing Services, the food and beverage operations from the Grad Lounge, and the delivery of certain major events and functions – all of which have sought to operate or deliver their program in a responsible manner, by calculating and then offsetting their carbon impact. In these instances, carbon offsets from external organizations were purchased to mitigate the impact of emissions that are either direct or indirect.

Managing York's carbon footprint requires the continuation of the Energy Management Program, as well as a commitment to communicate with all constituents on prudent energy practices while on campus. This aligns with York University's dedication to operate in a more sustainable manner and is consistent with the City of Toronto Secondary Plan for the University's Keele Campus, which contains provisions for sustainable practices, green spaces and preservation of natural features.

*Recommendation #39: Continue to position the University to manage its carbon footprint more effectively through the implementation of the energy management program and other initiatives; and expand efforts to engage the community in prudent energy conservation practices in order to sustain, and possibly improve, the targeted reduction in energy consumption and emissions.*

## 5. Short, medium and long-term recommendations

The recommendations of this report will need to be temporally staged. Some require significant preparatory time and coordination with diverse members of the York community and partners. Other recommendations may be implemented more promptly. The Council proposes that the recommendations be approached with an expectation of substantial progress in the short-, medium- or long-terms. Meanwhile, the Council recommends that, where appropriate, implementation not be limited to a particular term, but rather is subject to ongoing attention.

### short-term implementation (within 12 months)

- ☐ Recommendation #1: Establish opportunities for broad-based discussion of this report, including opportunities for constructive feedback.
- Recommendation #2: Develop a York University policy statement on sustainability.
- ☐ Recommendation #3: Include the Senior Manager, Environmental Design & Sustainability in the Sustainability Council membership
- ☐ Recommendation #4: Dedicate resources to the Sustainability Council to enable fulfillment of its objects
- ☐ Recommendation #5: Establish a formal role for the Yorkwise program in relation to the Sustainability Council.
- ☐ Recommendation #6: Establish a community of Campus Sustainability Ambassadors.
- ☐ Recommendation #7: Continue to develop and implement opportunities for student engagement in collaboration with the Student Sustainability Sub-Committee.
- ☐ Recommendation #8: Undertake and support a Sustainability Assessment Project.
- ☐ Recommendation #9: Engage a review of sustainability administration models across Canadian and international institutions of higher education, with a view to identifying the most suitable model for York.
- ☐ Recommendation #10: Request that the Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee (APPRC) and the Vice-President Academic and Provost make sustainability a major strategic feature in the White Paper and the new University Academic Plan.
- ☐ Recommendation #13: Work with the relevant faculty members/offices to design and implement a survey about sustainability within the existing York curriculum.
- ☐ Recommendation #15: Provide students with more opportunities to do research and work on campus sustainability projects.
- ☐ Recommendation #18: Assess and develop outreach initiatives to attract qualified applicants for part-time and full-time employment from communities-in-need surrounding York.
- ☐ Recommendation #21: Coordinate bridging and transitional programs and explore opportunities for ongoing budget support to these programs.

☐ Recommendation #23: Support the ongoing work of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights and help bridge this work with York's sustainability initiatives.

Recommendation #24: Develop a York-specific green standard for the development and construction of all new buildings and building renovations.

☐ Recommendation #25: Establish an institution-wide program that enhances "e-waste" recycling practices in all academic departments and administrative units, and locate drop boxes throughout the Keele and Glendon campuses to facilitate broader community participation.

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☐ Recommendation #30: Support (and if possible increase support for) organizations focused on traffic demand management, the promotion of transit use and other alternate modes of transportation, and like sustainable transportation initiatives.

☐ Recommendation #31: Establish policies and practices to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants from vehicles, for example through establishment and enforcement of a "no idling" policy for all vehicles on York's campuses.

☐ Recommendation #37: Continue to develop ecologically progressive plans and procedures to guide campus landscaping and grounds management practices.

☐ Recommendation #38: Integrate relevant research and studies into grounds management and other areas of campus operations by establishing formal opportunities with straightforward processes for the engagement of students (for example, through course-related research projects, internships, paid work, or volunteer opportunities).

☐ Recommendation #39: Continue to position the University to manage its carbon footprint more effectively through the implementation of the energy management program and other initiatives; and expand efforts to engage the community in prudent energy conservation practices in order to sustain, and possibly improve, the targeted reduction in energy consumption and emissions.

#### medium-term implementation (within 1-3 years)

☐ Recommendation #13: Include sustainability in more courses and academic programs throughout the University.

☐ Recommendation #14: Encourage and support the development of non-degree offerings in sustainability.

☐ Recommendation #16: Enhance York's resource commitment to existing initiatives such as those identified in the Inventory of Community Engagement (Office of University Events and Community Relations)

☐ Recommendation #17: Improve access to York facilities such as the library system, buildings, and sports complexes and laboratories. In particular, a number of days each year should be designated as "community use days" for specified facilities

(with streamlined approval process and waived or significantly reduced fees for facility use).

☐ Recommendation #19: Through the York Foundation encourage donor programs that enhance bursaries and awards for local residents.

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☐ Recommendation #36: Compile and analyze studies of the natural features of the University's two campuses, establish a York inventory of natural features and develop a comprehensive plan for protecting and enhancing York's endowment of natural features.

#### long-term implementation (3+ years)

Recommendation #11: Develop a greater focus on sustainability in the York curriculum\_

☐ Recommendation #22: Support and implement the policies of the updated York University Secondary Plan, specifically as they relate to housing, community services and facilities.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the following people for their participation in the ongoing work of the President's Sustainability Council:

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